

1 **Amendment to the Claims**

2 In the Claims:

3 Please cancel Claims 36 and 37.

4 Please amend Claim 33 as follows.

5 1. (Previously Presented) A method for enabling a host player to select one or more other
6 participants to join in playing a multiplayer online electronic game, comprising the steps of:

7 (a) enabling the host player to create a list of contacts comprising one or more
8 other persons who may be interested in participating in playing the multiplayer online electronic
9 game;

10 (b) enabling the host player to select one or more of the other persons from among
11 the list of contacts to participate in playing the multiplayer online electronic game;

12 (c) automatically sending an electronic invitation to each of the one or more other
13 persons selected by the host player, to join in playing the multiplayer online electronic game;

14 (d) enabling each of the one or more other persons who receive the electronic
15 invitation that was automatically sent, to selectively join the multiplayer online electronic game as a
16 participant; and

17 (e) providing an availability status for each person in the list of contacts so as to
18 enable the host player to identify persons in the list of contacts who are currently available for
19 playing the multiplayer online electronic game.

20 2. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of providing an availability
21 status for each person in the list of contacts so as to enable the host player to identify persons in the list
22 of contacts who are currently available to participate in playing the multiplayer online electronic game.

23 3. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 2, further comprising the step of enabling
24 each person in the list of contacts to select the availability status indicating the person's availability
25 for participating in playing the multiplayer online electronic game.

26 4. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the host player is enabled to build a list of chat
27 contacts through use of an online messaging service, said list of chat contacts automatically being
28 parsed to create the list of contacts.

29 5. (Original) The method of Claim 4, wherein at least one person in the list of contacts is not
30 currently logged into the online messaging service and has been invited to join the multiplayer online

1 electronic game, further comprising the step of automatically forwarding the electronic invitation to
2 join the multiplayer online electronic game to said at least one person when said at least one person
3 logs into the online messaging service.

4 6. (Original) The method of Claim 4, wherein selection of game participants and voice chat
5 communications before and during game play is facilitated by a gaming utility that runs on an
6 electronic device operated by each game participant and at least one person in the list of contacts has
7 been invited to join the multiplayer online electronic game and has not started an instance of the
8 gaming utility on the electronic device(s) operated by said at least one person, further comprising the
9 step of automatically forwarding the electronic invitation to join the multiplayer online electronic
10 game to said at least one person when said at least one person launches an instance of the gaming
11 utility on the electronic device(s) operated by said at least one person.

12 7. (Previously Cancelled)

13 8. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the electronic invitation comprises a verbal
14 message.

15 9. (Original) The method of Claim 8, further comprising the step of enabling the electronic
16 invitation to be accepted by a person invited to join the game through a verbal response spoken by
17 said person.

18 10. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising the steps of providing a list of
19 multiplayer online electronic games to the host player; and enabling the host player to select the
20 multiplayer online electronic game from said list of multiplayer online electronic games.

21 11. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

22 (a) providing a user interface including a first display area on which the list of
23 contacts is displayed and a second display area corresponding to a voice chat session; and

24 (b) enabling the host to select the one or more contracts to invite to join the voice
25 chat session by selecting one or more contacts from among the list of contacts displayed in the first
26 display area and dragging and dropping them onto the second display area.

27 12. (Original) The method of Claim 11, wherein a plurality of contacts can be selected and
28 dragged and dropped onto the second display area at one time.

29 13. (Original) A computer readable medium having computer executable instructions for
30 performing the steps recited in Claim 1.

1 14. (Previously Presented) A method for enabling a host player to select one or more other
2 players to participate in a multiplayer online electronic game played using a plurality of electronic
3 devices linked in communication over a communications network, each of said plurality of electronic
4 devices being operated by a different player, the method comprising the steps of:

5 (a) enabling the host player to initiate a chat session;
6 (b) enabling the host player to invite one or more other players to join the chat
7 session;

8 (c) enabling any of the players who were invited by the host, to be a participant in
9 the chat session;

10 (d) automatically launching an instance of the multiplayer online electronic game
11 on each electronic device being operated by any player participating in the chat session, said step of
12 automatically launching being in response to a game initiating action performed by the host player so
13 that any player participating in the chat session automatically becomes a participant in the
14 multiplayer online electronic game; and

15 (e) enabling each player to transmit voice chat data to all of the other players who
16 have joined the chat session.

17 15. (Original) The method of Claim 14, further comprising the step of providing a network
18 address of the electronic device the host player is using and operating so as to enable the host player
19 to invite one or more other players to join in playing the multiplayer online electronic game, by
20 referencing said network address.

21 16. (Original) The method of Claim 14, wherein the host player is a member of an online
22 messaging service that enables the host player to build a player contact list comprising a list of one or
23 more players with whom the host prefers to chat and/or play multiplayer online electronic games,
24 further comprising the steps of:

25 (a) displaying the player contact list to the host player; and
26 (b) enabling the host player to select one or more other players to participate in
27 playing the multiplayer online electronic game from the player contact list.

28 17. (Original) The method of Claim 16, further comprising the step of providing an
29 availability status for each player in the player contact list.

1 18. (Original) The method of Claim 16, further comprising the step of enabling each player
2 to select an availability status indicating the player's availability to join a chat session.

3 19. (Original) The method of Claim 16, further comprising the steps of:

4 (a) providing a user interface including a first display area on which the list of
5 contacts is displayed and a second display area corresponding to a voice chat session; and

6 (b) enabling the host to select the one or more contracts to invite to join the voice
7 chat session by selecting one or more contacts from among the list of contacts displayed in the first
8 display area and dragging and dropping them onto the second display area.

9 20. (Original) The method of Claim 19, wherein a plurality of contacts can be selected and
10 dragged and dropped onto the second display area at one time.

11 21. (Original) The method of Claim 14, further comprising the step of sending an electronic
12 invitation to join the chat session to each of the one or more players invited by the host player to join
13 the chat session.

14 22. (Original) The method of Claim 21, wherein the electronic invitation includes an audible
15 announcement apprising any player receiving the electronic invitation that the host player has invited
16 the player to join the chat session.

17 23. (Original) The method of Claim 22, further comprising the step of enabling the
18 electronic invitation to join the chat session to be accepted by a recipient through a verbal response
19 spoken by the recipient, whereupon said recipient becomes a participant in the chat session.

20 24. (Original) The method of Claim 14, wherein each player is a member of an online
21 messaging service that enables the player to build a player contact list comprising a list of one or
22 more players with whom the player prefers to chat and/or play multiplayer online computer games,
23 further comprising the step of:

24 (a) providing a list of chat sessions that are being hosted by at least one other
25 player contact in a player contact list built by the player; and

26 (b) enabling the player to join a chat session appearing in the list of chat sessions.

27 25. (Original) The method of Claim 14, further comprising the step of providing a headset
28 operatively coupled in communication with each of said plurality of electronic devices, each headset
29 comprising at least one sound transducer and a microphone employed by each players to participate
30 in a voice chat session.

1 26. (Previously Cancelled)

2 27. (Original) The method of Claim 14, further comprising the steps of providing a list of
3 multiplayer online electronic games; and enabling the host player to select the multiplayer online
4 electronic game that will be played.

5 28. (Original) A computer readable medium having computer executable instructions for
6 performing the steps recited in Claim 14.

7 29. (Original) A method for enabling a host player to select one or more other players to
8 participate in a multiplayer online electronic game played using a plurality of electronic devices
9 linked in communication over a communications network, each of said plurality of electronic devices
10 being operated by a different player, the method comprising the steps of:

11 (a) enabling the host player to initiate a voice chat session;

12 (b) enabling the host player to invite one or more other players to join the voice
13 chat session;

14 (c) enabling any of the players who were invited by the host, to be a participant in
15 the voice chat session;

16 (d) enabling the host player to forward a network address corresponding to an
17 electronic device being operated by the host to any other player participating in the voice chat
18 session; and

19 (e) transmitting a voice chat message from the host player to any other player
20 participating in the voice chat session, said voice chat message identifying a multiplayer online
21 electronic game that the host player will be launching or has already launched on the electronic device
22 operated by the host player so that any other player participating in the voice chat session can
23 selectively launch an instance of the multiplayer online electronic game on the electronic device
24 operated by the player, so that any player participating in the chat session who selectively launches the
25 multiplayer online electronic game becomes a participant in the multiplayer online electronic game.

26 30. (Original) The method of Claim 29, wherein the host player is a member of an online
27 messaging service that enables the host player to build a player contact list of one or more players
28 with whom the host prefers to chat and/or play multiplayer online computer games, further
29 comprising the steps of:

30 (a) providing the player contact list to the host player; and

(b) enabling the host player to select one or more players to participate in the multiplayer online electronic game from the player contact list.

31. (Original) The method of Claim 30, further comprising the step of providing an availability status for each player in the player contact list.

32. (Original) A computer readable medium having computer executable instructions for performing the steps recited in Claim 29.

33. (Currently Amended) A system for enabling a host player to select one or more other players to participate in playing a multiplayer online electronic game played using a plurality of electronic devices linked in communication over a communications network, each of said plurality of electronic devices being operated by a different player and including:

(a) a display on which a user interface is implemented;

(b) a memory in which a plurality of machine instructions are stored;

(c) a microphone operatively coupled to the electronic device and which produces in response to words spoken by a user into the microphone;

(d) a sound transducer operatively coupled to the electronic device so as to replicate sounds corresponding to an audio data signal received over the communications network by the electronic device to which said at least one sound transducer is operatively coupled; and

(e) a processor coupled to the memory for executing said plurality of machine instructions, said processor implementing a plurality of functions when executing the machine instructions, including:

(i) enabling the host player to initiate a chat session;

(ii) enabling the host player to invite one or more other players to join the

(iii) enabling any of the players who were invited by the host, to be a participant in the chat session;

(iv) automatically launching an instance of the multiplayer online electronic game on each electronic device being operated by any player participating in the chat session, said step of automatically launching being in response to a game initiating action performed by the host player so that any player participating in the chat session automatically becomes a participant in the multiplayer online electronic game; and

(v) employing the microphone, the sound transducer, and the electronic device to enable each player to transmit voice chat data to all other players participating in the chat session;

(vi) sending an electronic invitation to a player being invited by the host player to join the chat session; and

(vii) producing an audible announcement with said at least one sound transducer apprising a recipient of the electronic invitation that the host player has invited the recipient to join the chat session.

34. (Original) The system of Claim 33, wherein the host player is a member of an online messaging service that enables the host player to build a player contact list of one or more players with whom the host may desire to play multiplayer online computer games, and wherein execution of the plurality of machine instructions further implements the functions of:

(a) obtaining the player contact list from the online messaging service;

(b) displaying the player contact list to the host player; and

(c) enabling the host player to select one or more players to participate in the online electronic game from the player contact list.

35. (Previously Cancelled)

36. (Currently Canceled)

37. (Currently Canceled)

38. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim 37 33, wherein execution of the plurality of machine instructions further implements the function of enabling the electronic invitation to be accepted by a the recipient through use of a verbal response spoken into the microphone by the recipient.